



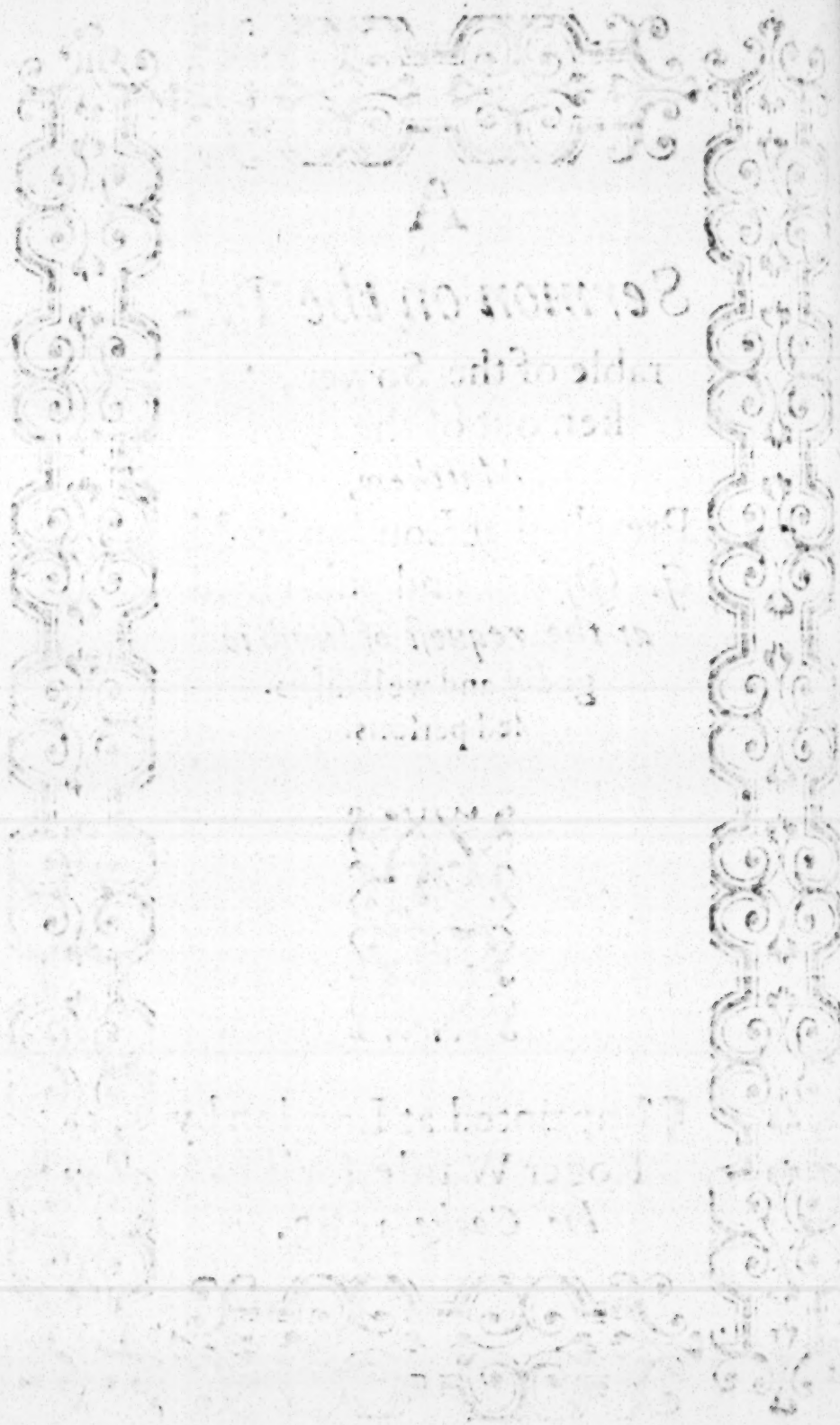
A

*Sermon on the Pa-
rable of the Sower, ta-
ken out of the 13. of
Matthew,*

Preached at London by M.
G. Gifford, and published
*at the request of sundrie
godly and well dispo-
sed persons,*



¶ Imprinted at London by
Roger Warde, for To-
bie Cooke. 1583.



A
SE. WYON ON THE

Table of the
Heavenly
Bodies
of the
Universe
as they
appear
to the
eye

By
J. W. WYON
Author of
the
"Heavenly
Bodies"

London:
Printed by
J. W. WYON
1850

TO THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL

M. John Hutton Esquier, George Gifford wi.

sheth health and increase of
worship.



IT is more then halfe a
yeare (Right worshipfull)
since I handeled this Pa-
rable of the Sower, in a
Sermon at London. Be-
ing instantly vrged by a
friend whiche hearde mee, to put it in
writing, although I was very vnwilling,
for fundrie considerations, yet I made
some promise if leasure should serue. Af-
terward when I would very gladly haue
ben released at her hands whome I pro-
mised, I coulde by no meanes obtaine it.
I haue therefore at the laste so nigh as I
could, set downe in writing, that whiche
I then vttered in speaking, I knowe that
I haue omitted some thinges in the par-
ticular applications, and exhortations
which I made: & also I haue added some-
what whiche eyther then came not to
minde, or else time did not serue to han-
dle. I am bolde to present and dedicate
this my poore trauell vnto your wor-
ship, moued thereto with diuers respects
as thinking my selfe in ductie bounde,

A.ij.

not

The Epistle Dedicatorie.

not onely with this common and generall bonde that ye are one whiche long time haue professed the glorious Gospell of Iesus Christe : but with diuers more speciall, whiche are so well knowen vnto you, that it were needelssse for mee to recite them: only thus much, seeing I was borne & brought vp vnder you, my parents receiuing benefites daily from you, I thinke I ought, when as I am not able to make any recompence, at least to shew some token of a gratefull minde. But especially I am moued herevnto, with consideration of the greatest blessing whiche all my kinred haue enioyed by you now so long, in prouiding and procuring their spirituall instruction. I pray you accept of my good will, and account of mee as one that prayeth to the Lorde for you, that he will multiplie & increase his good giftes still in you, to the glorie of his holy name, the benefite of his Church, and your endelssse comforte in Iesus Christ. Amen.

Yours for euer to command in the Lord,

George Gifford.

¶ A SERMON VPON THE Parable of the Sower.

Mat. 13.

- 1 **I**N that day Iesus wente out of the house and fate by the Sea side.
 - 2 And there was gathered vnto him a multitude, so that he entred into a ship, & fate downe, and the whole multitude stood on the shoare.
 - 3 And he spake many things vnto them by Parables, saying: Beholde a Sower went forth to sowe.
 - 4 And as he sowed, some feedes fell by the way side: and the foules came and eate them vp.
 - 5 Other fell vpon stonie ground, where they had not much earth, and by & by they sprang vp, because they had not depth of earth.
 - 6 And when the Sun rose they were parched, and because they had no roote they withered.
 - 7 Other fell amonge thornes, and the thornes grew vp and choked it.
 - 8 Other fell into good grounde, and brought forth fruite, one seed an hundred fold, another sixty, another thirtie.
 - 9 He
- A.iii.

A Sermon on the

9 Hee that hath cares to heare , let him heare.



Although the Jewes, at
suche time as our Savi-
our Christe came into the
wozld, had the woꝝde of
God among them: and had
also the temple and Sina-
gogues where they heard y^e same reade &
expounded: yet their state was very mi-
serable, for Christ saith, they wer as sheep
without a shepheard: because their tea-
chers, y^e Scribes & Pharesies, being choa-
ked with couetousnesse, & puffed vp with
vaine glozie, were become stark naught,
coꝝrupt in manners, and coꝝrupting the
woꝝd with their sond gloses: theiꝝ teach-
ing also was so cold, & with so little pow-
er euen in y^e which they taught truely, y^e
the people had no great liste to heare the.
But when Iohn Baptist the foꝛerunner
of Christ, was raised vp to publishe the
beginning of the Gospell, & to pꝛepare y^e
way for y^e Loꝝde: he like a sounding and
shrill Trumpet, with the power of his
woꝝd shooke their hearts, & rolsed their
dꝛowlines, so y^e fro his time y^e kingdome
of

Parable of the Sower.

of heauen suffred violence. When Christ
Jesus himselfe vttered his voice in prea-
ching, and his diuine power in working
wonders, ther appered such a wonderfull
maiestie in his person, as did amaze the
hearers: wherupon his fame was noysed
far and nere, so y they came running out
of all quarters of y land by heapes, for to
see & heare him, they seemed to forget the-
selves & their state, in leauing al world-
ly affaires, as y husbandmē their plough,
y Artificers their craftes & sciences, fol-
lowing him into y wildernes with their
wiues & their children laggering at their
heelles, so great was their zeale. So that,
as befoze almoste all did perishe in y mi-
serable state they were in: now it seemed
y the greatest part, or at lest an innume-
rable multitude did with sache care im-
brace y heuenly doctrine, as y they shuld
be most happy & come to eternall life: but
this was otherwise, for our savior Christ
sheweth hēre, y of this gret heap & rable
mēt of people, y were so zealous, and tra-
uelled so far to heare him, ther wer thre
parts which did not profit by his doctrine
but cōtinued still damned & forlozne cre-

A Sermon on the

tures, onely one parte of soure, are true schollers. And because we be ranke hypocrites, prone & redie to deceiue our selues, Christ Iesus layeth open the matter so plainly, & in so familiar a kinde of teaching, y^e vnles we wilfully blind our selues we cannot but see how the case standeth in every of vs, each man in himselfe: for hee taketh a similitude from a sower of corne, which going and casting his seed abroad, it lighteth vpon sundrie kindes of ground, some falleth by y^e waye side, where the path is trampled & beaten smooth, & hard by mens feet, & is made like a pavement, & there it lyeth aboue y^e ground altogether vncouered, the Fowles come by and by and picke it vp.

Some falleth into stony ground or rockie, or as S. Luke saith vpon a rocke: where there is a little thin crust of earth in y^e top, and some moysture in which the seed is a little couered: & because y^e earth which doeth couer it is but shallowe, it springeth vp quickly & brancheth, and is fresh & greene, & being so good, seemeth to be forward corne, & such as would yelde to the husbandman a plentifull harueste: but

Parable of the Sower.

but because the roote cannot spreade it selfe deepe inough to sucke iuyce out of the grounde for the nourishment of the blade, when the parchinge heate of the Sunne lighteth vppon it, then it is dyed vp, and scorched, and dyeth, and neuer bringeth forth fruite. Some other doeth fall amonge thornes: there is deapth of earth for the seede to growe, so that yt springeth vp, and not onely a blade, but also a stalke, and commeth so farre as to haue the eare: but the thornes growe vp with it, ouershadowe and choake it, in somuch that the Corne in the eare, can not haue the benefit of y Sunne to make it ripe: therefore the fruite that it seemeth to bringe forth commeth to naught. Some other seedes fall into good ground, and grow vp, and bringe forth seasonable fruite, one karnell an hundred, another sixtie, another thirtie. This is the Parable. Nowe for the meaning of it, wee are not to seeke farre, neither to goe by coniectures, for Chyriste himselfe doeth expound and interprete euerie parte of it a little after in this Chapter: I neede not but to lay open his Exposition.

A. v.

The

A Sermon on the

The seede is the woorde of God: the sower of it is the preacher and publysher of the same: for as the sower doth fill his hand and so casteth it abroade vppon the ground, not setting it seede by seede, or choosing a place for euerie seede, but where it lighteth: even so the preacher doth cast forth the woorde among the people, and looke howe the ground is into which it falleth, so doeth it prosper: for your hearts are the ground vppon which it is caste: you that are the hearers and amonge whome the seede is sown, haue euerie one a hearte which is one of these foure sortes of ground, vppon which the seed falleth: and because the seed hath been & is still daily sown among ye, I thinke this parcell of Scripture is verie fit and agreable, euen as a touchstone for euerie one to trye himselfe withall, whether he haue rightly embraced the Gospel, and to his saluation: for what a sottishnesse were this, when we haue so iust & plaine a rule, not to measure our selues with it. But going on, on, nothings consider whether wee bee not one of those three euill sortes of ground, which receyue the
seede,

Parable of the Sower.

seed, but bring forth no fruit, thinking we be well if we profess the Gospel or heare it, after any sort. Let vs goe forward: those which receyue the seed by the way side, are they which heare the word and doe not vnderstand it, then cometh the euill one, or as Saint Luke saith, the Diuell, and taketh it awaye from their hearte. In these firste kinde of hearers, wee haue to obserue, howe that their heartes being hard and smooth lyke a path that is trampled and beaten with mens feet the word hath no entrance, but lyeth aboue vncouered: for like as when a man casteth an handfull of cozne vpon a very hard & smooth path, it is all one as if it were caste vpon a pavement: so also through y^e custom and deceitfulnes of sinning y^e diuel hath made the harts of these vnmeet to receiue the heauenly seed of the word: & loke how ye see Crows and other foules follow the heeles of the Sower, to pick vp and deuoure such karnels as doe ly vncouered: in like maner do the diuels come like greedy foules into the assemblies, where the word of God is preached, to take it awaye from the heartes of the
people

A Sermon on the

people, that it may not grow there. This peradventure will seeme straunge to some, that Satan shoulde haue anye entraunce into the Church amonge Gods people, especially when they be about the beste and moste holy exercises of hearing the worde and of prayer. Howe straunge seuer it may seeme, and howe manye sooner haue beene, or be of y fonde and dotthe opinion, to thinke that the Diuell hath nothinge to doe with them, or cometh not neere them, when they bee about these holye thinges: wee are to beleene Christ who telleth vs the contrary: and we are wisely to consider, that when we are nighest that which should do our soules good, then is this enemye readiest at hande, and doeth moste basely bestirre him. If this were not vttered by oure Sauour Christ himselte, we might wonder, and for mine owne parte I woulde not cease wondering to see manye hearers which carrie alway almost nothing, which is to any purpose: let a man tell a longe storie in a worldly matter, they haue wit inough to recite it in order againe, and to keepe it in remembraunce

Parable of the Sower.

a long time after : but let the Preacher
speake neuer so plaine, although they sit
and looke him in the face, yet if ye en-
quire of them so soone as they be out at
the Church doores, ye shal easily perceiue
that (as the common saying is) it went
in at the one eare, and out at the other.
They will say peradventure, after this
manner, it was a good Sermon, I wold
we could follow it, he saide very well:
he is a perfect ready man in the Pul-
pet. But aske, what doctrine did he han-
dle? When are they at a pause, and set
at a dead lift. They will make this an-
swere: we are not able to carry away
so much as other can, neuerthelesse wee
hope that we be as good toward God, as
they that carry away mosse. They will
also confesse that the worde of God is
good, and that we should be ruled by it.
Let vs therefore dearely beloued, (if we
desire not to be of the number of these)
marke well the subtil sleights, and poli-
licie of the Diuel, how he handleth and
conueyeth the matter with this kinde of
people. There is no doubt of this, but
that if he can he will drawe away the
minde

A Sermon on the

minde from comming to the Sermon, one pelting lette or other muste come in the waye : if there be no worldly busynesse to be done : then a paire of cardes or tables or some honest recreation, it should be no we no good ciuilitie to parte compaignie when friendes are met together, this is the surest waye if it maye be obtained : but what if he faile here in : They come to the place where the seede shalbe sowen, sit down, and minde to heare : then the next way is to come with them, and to attende at their elbowe, seeking how to depriue them of the word. Nowe his best way is to bring them asleepe because they were then as good be absent : or into a slumber, that they maye heare onely a sound and a confused humming, without any perseuerance of the things vttered : or els when they heare any perfect sentence, or a few sentences, they know not why they be vttered, because they heare not that which went before. Such as are not so drouisie headed, being wakefull, he seeketh still to conuey some thoughtes into their minds, whereaboutes they may be occupied, and their

Parable of the Sower.

Understanding drawn away: the minde
of a man beeing light and inconstant, if
he can put in but one motion, it often-
times draweth with it so manye linkes
as make vp a whole line, in the meane
time the Preacher goeth on, and he vn-
derstandeth not what was saide, and so
when his mind returneth, he can haue no
sound knowledge of the thinges vttered,
but a confused opinion: into these by
thoughtes, men are oftentimes brought,
even by occasion of some worde or sen-
tence which they heard vttered, and are
caried so far, y they cannot of long time
recouer their minde to bring it againe to
the matter. Seeing this great danger, we
ought when we come to heare Gods
word taught, to make account that we goe
about a very hard worke, y we goe to en-
counter wth satan hand to hand, who seeketh
then most busily to steal away our hart: y
he may make y word fruitles in vs, and
cause vs to sinne greuously against God.
There is no one man which maketh con-
science of hearing the word rightly, which
setting these things together, the reuerence
we owe vnto it, y steadines of our minde,
which

A Sermon on the

which should be vpon it, and the care to keepe it, but will easily graunt that it is as hard and painfull a trauel to do this, as for the man that worketh in the sorest bodily labour. Here is therefore a lesson for euery man to apply to himself when he is going to heare the worde, to thinke I am nowe going about a great worke, I shall be too weake if the Lord God do not mightely assist mee: for I am not to sit downe there at ease, but to wastle and struggle with the Diuell, & with all the corruptions of mine owne flesh, and hardnesse of my heart: that my minde maye be kept stedfast vpon the worde, that I may receiue it with all reuerence & feare, as the worde of the great and glorious God: not to iudge of it at mine own pleasure, but to craue wisdom from the Lorde: not to heare it and to let it go, but to keepe it as a most precious Jewell locked vp in my heart, that I may guide my selfe thereby. And we shall be a great deale the rather moued to this diligence, if we consider what a companion we carie about with vs, and what a guest we lodge withall

Parable of the Sower.

withall, when we be such as heare the word, and doe not keepe it. For Christe telleth vs that it is the diuell which doeth this: whiche as a greedy fowle deuoureth the seede which was sown in our hearte: if any make none account to haue him possessing their minde, & hardening their hearts against the word: then let them continue in their sloth to heare with drowisie minds, to heare & not to vnderstand: to regarde the holy word, but as the word of a man: to make little account to keepe it. But if he thinke it a most miserable thing to haue so filthy a beast, and so foule a spirit to lodge in his breast: if he thinke it to be a most vile slavery, to be vanquished & overcome of so horrible an enemy, to be lead captiue & kept thralld vnder such a tyrant: then let him thinke also howe miserable a thing it is to be such a kind of ground as doth receiue the seede by the way side: for vndoubtedly howsoeuer men seeme to defy the diuell, and curse him as though he should not come nigh them, yet seeing it is no mortall man but the Lorde Iesus Christe himself, who telleth vs here that

*Gen. viii
in Gal.*

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491

A Sermon on the

the diuel is not onely nigh, but in these kinde of hearers, euen hardening their heartes, & blinding their eyes, we ought most constantly to beleene it. He that shal deeply weigh y^e estate of our church at this day, will soone be brought to confesse, that there be many of this first sort of hearers, they shal perceiue it right well by this, that they are not able in any wise to iudge o^r put difference betwene sound and sincere preaching, and vaine prating: they know not when the Preacher doth minister vnto the whole some soue, & when there is nothing but chaffe & winde: ye shal heare them highly commend some Sermon, as a matter wo^rthy to be written in letters of gold, whē as in deed it deserueth not so much as to be noted with a coale. I speake not of those silly wretches, which were neuer as yet acquainted with preaching, for it is no great maruell, though they be not able to discerne chalke from cheese: o^r being blind for to iudge of colours, but to such as long time haue ben hearers, & yet neuer the wiser, bicause they are not able to iudge when sound and necessary
con

Parable of the Sower.

conclusions are drawne out of y^e wordes
but is al one with them, whether y^e rea-
son that is made be good or bad, strong
or weake: yea further ye shal perceiue y^e
euen a little shew of a reason although
neuer so doltish, being against true gods
linesse, doth moze preuaile with them,
then a multitude of infallible p^roofs, al-
though they be neuer so sure: and that
which is so grosse and absurd that a child
may laugh at, seemeth to them a verye
strong pillar to leane to. There needeth
no moze when a man preacheth vnto
them, but a glorious shew of learning, a
sweet ringing voice, & maters so strange
and straungely handled, y^e they may be
brought into a wonderment of that they
know not. And Satan hath many chap-
laines fit for this turne, to serue y^e baine
humor of such people, & to set forth them-
selues after a p^ropous sort: moze seeking
their owne vaine glory, then the glorie
of the Gospell, in the conuersion of the
people. The second kinde of ground are
they which receiue the seed vpon y^e harde
rock, wher there is some entrance, & the
word hath a shallow root in them, for as

A Sermon on the

it were the top of their heart is soft after a sort, and there it is covered a litle, & it groweth vp quickly, and springeth fresh, they seeme to be stout and excellent professors, they brag of great zeale: a man would take them to be sincere, & so they take themselves: but when the Sun ariseth, that is, the fire trial or parching heat of persecution, they stumble & fall away, and because the word had no deepe roote in them, it withereth and bringeth forth no fruite: these also are not profited by the word of grace, but are still cast awayes and damned creatures: in this kinde of ground, or in these hearers, if we note well, we shall see that which is straunge and wonderfull: when Christ sayth and testifieth of them, that they receiue the word with ioy: these be not blasphemers or persecutors of the word: they be not contemners whiche regarde not at all to heare it: they come not vnder a shewe or pretence as to a thing which otherwise they haue no care nor feeling of, or which they delight not for to heare, but how? They receiue it with ioy, & take such pleasure therein, that re-
ture

' Parable of the Sower.

turning they can saye, surely this was a
very notable peece of woork, & wel han-
deled, I am glad that I heard it, it doeth
mee even as much good as my meate, I
would go a mile to heare the like again.
Is not this then merueylous and feare-
full, that a man maye goe thus far, & yet
be a cast away, and a fozlozne wretch? It
is not a thinge to bee wondered at, when
the holy scriptures giue sentence against
those traiterous villaines, which set the
selues against God, and treade down his
laws: but when God vttereth this sharpe
sentence against this zealous kinde of
men, if it cause vs not to woonder, yet it
may make vs to tremble, when we see y
a man may proceede thus far in religion
& yet be damned. When wee vnderstand
y a man may be zealous, & redy to heare
preaching, vnderstandeth, carrieth away,
letteth it grow in his hart, hath some ioy
in it, and yet neuer the better, abiding
still vnder the curse. But there be some
which will obiecte against me & say, this
is no good manner of teaching, for y vse
of true teaching, is to builde vp and edi-
fie y faith: but this seemeth to take away

A Sermon on the

the certaintie of faith from all, so that no man can tell whether hee shal bee saved: For by what meanes can a man make a better triall and pꝛoofe of his faith then this, that he giueth eare to Gods woꝛde, vnderstaðeth it, carrieth it away, & ioyneth in it: If such a mā may bee damned, who maye not dispaire? I aunswere with S. Paule, 1. Cor. 10. 12. Hee that thinketh hee standeth, let him take heede he do not fall. If the admonition were necessary to the Corinthians, it is necessary for vs all. One of that pꝛincipall ends and bles of pꝛeaching, is to giue men warning that they do not deceiue theselues with euery kind of faith or ioy in the woꝛde: but to looke for good and sound triall in them selues: which is not the waye to bzing men to dispaire, but to bzing them to true godlinesse: to cause them to shake of securitie and losenesse in the seruice of God: to beware least their heartes bee harde still within: it causeth men to try themselves least they should bee deceyued by a vaine shadow of a dead and fruitlesse faith: for Christ sayeth, y these belecue (for so it is expꝛessed by S. Luke the 8. 13. (& ioye in the
the

Parable of the Sower.

the woꝝd, and yet are damned. Then let vs come to the particular applying of this point: to see howe wee are to deale with our selues, when ye receiue y^e woꝝd take hærde that ye giue it deapth of earth inough, looke that your heart bee not soft and pliable inough a little aboue, and a hard rocke of stone within, but see that it bee digged and softened to the bottome, y^e the woꝝd may take roote deepe inough. Alas, what a miserable thing is it, when Chꝛist hath giuen vs warning heere so plainlye, for a man to bee a zealous Gos- peller, not onely willinge to heare, but hath an earnest desire, and trauaileth to heare, taketh pleasure & delight when he heareth, yet neuertheles, because hee taketh no heed thereto, his heart within is so stonie, y^e hee heareth but to his further increse of damnation. Canie think it go- eth wel with them when as they receiue this testimonie from men: hee is a sound Protestant, he fauoureth & delighteth in y^e truth, these indeed be great tokens of y^e feare of god, but yet we are not to rest in them: our chiefe dealing is betwene god & our heart, & that in this thing whether

A Sermon on the

our heart be not harde and rockie. Those are a thousand times happie, which feele melting heartes & soft affections, so that Gods woord doth pearse into them, and causeth them to tremble at the maiestye & power of the same: their tender heart doth sigh and mourne for their iniquitie. As on y contrarie part, they which make no conscience of sinne, but are hardened in their affections, although they seeme to bee in good case, yet are they cursed and miserable. Let every man therefore that goeth from the Sermon, carrye this with him: I heare by Chzistes owne woords, y there is a stonie ground where the seede falleth: where it groweth but not deepe inough, it springeth vp but doth not bringe forth fruite, this is a wofull case, if I should be in the number of these for then all my labour is lost, whiche I bestowe in frequenting Sermons, yea, it were much better y I had neuer hearde: I feele that I ioye in it, I would not for any thinge but I had heard it: but Chzist saith that the reprobate, some of them doe heare the woord with ioy, so that if I looke not narrowly to mine owne heart,

Parable of the Sower.

I may for all this be damned: therefore
I muste not satisfie my selfe with this,
but see that I couer the woorde deepe
inough, that my heart be softened in such
sorte, that I feele the roote goeth deepe,
yea, so deepe, that it can neuer bee rooted
out: And therefore let him continuallie
crie vnto God and saye: O Lord make
softe my harde and stony hearte, let it
be a melting hearte, that thy holy woorde
maye growe in it for ever. I woulde to
GOD, this doctrine of our Saviour
Christ, mighte make euerye of vs to
tremble and shake (as indeede if it were
well weighed, it is so fearefull, that it
mighte cause the haire of our heades to
stand vp) for then would we not so loose-
lie and securelie walke in the hardnes of
our heartes, there would not bee so ma-
nye backsliders in time of persecution:
there would not bee so manye braue boa-
sters and praters of Religion, who are
readie to pull in their hories, and to hide
their heades, so soone as there is anye
feare of daunger, or lykelyhood of per-
secution: neyther would men beare them-
selues in hand, that they be iolly Profes-

A Sermon on the

soys, when they have but a little tasted of the worde, and are no more but emptye barreles, which giue a greate sounde. Here then we be set a woork with great toyle, to haue this same harde stonye ground made soft, and fit to receiue this heauenlye seede. And hee which is not carefull in this poynt, to take paines, yee shall see him ware so harde, that euen as a continuall raine dropping vppon a Rocke of Stone maketh it neuer the softer, so nothings can make his heart to relente. This may teach vs then to cease maruelling, when we see so many which willingly giue themselves to bee taught, and haue still little remoyce of sinne. The Lorde for his mercie sake make vs wise and sharpe sighted to iudge of oure selues: not to bee leade on forwarde in a carnall profession, but to giue credite to our heauenlye teacher, who hath heere opened his holy mouth to instructe vs so plainly, and befoze hand to warne vs of the great danger: that we may stirre vp our selues, and be quickened in our dull spirits, with all humble submission, and bowing to wne our neckes, to receiue

Parable of the Sower.

reine the doctrine of our Lorde, and to open our heartes in such sorte that hee may digge in them, and thruste in his spade to the bottome. For otherwyle, it cannot goe well with vs. If this were practised among vs, wee shoulde not haue so manie olde rustie Protestantes: which if a man talke with them from morning to night, they are able to continue speach in reciting stories and places of Scripture, and will vtter matter against the doctrine of the Pope: but lette a man brge them with the doctrine of regeneration, and stande vpon the necessity of sincere Repentaunce, shewing them that they muste bee trulye humbled vnder the burthen of their sinnes, that they muste mortifie and subdue their carnall lustes: this is too hard a cruss for their old teeth. This matter doeth marre all: this doeth robbe them of their glozie: and therefore they canne not willinglie abyde to heare of it. Let vs come nowe to the thirde kinde of ground, which receiucth the sæde among the thorns: here is depth inough of earth: so y as the second sorte of hearers seemed to go far beyond the first,
so

A Sermon on the

so these seeme to goe farre beyond them,
and to come nigher to eternall life, for
here the wood doth grow and hath rote
so deepe, that it springeth forth so farre,
that Christ saith, it groweth vp, and the
thornes grow vp with it, the stalke doth
shoote forth the eare, and lacketh but ri-
ping. For this may bee proued by Saint
Luke, who saith that they bee not (Te-
lesphorountes) that is, suche as beare
ripe and timely fruite: for these profes-
sors doe manye good woorkes, and seeme
to bringe forth the fruites of the Gospel:
and that in suche wise that men can not
alwayes discern them, but thinke their
deedes to be notable: but Christe Iesus
doth shew that their woorkes befoze God,
(who onely cannot bee deceyued) are as
Corne which lacketh riping, which bee-
ing ouershadowed with bushes, wither-
eth in the eare and commeth to naught:
this is a dangerous case if wee looke
not to it: That a man maye heare the
Gospell preached, carrie it away, bee mo-
ued thereby to doe manie good woorkes:
and yet bee damned. There is a thousande
folde made therefore, which doeth not
looke

¶ Parable of the Sower.

looke to himselfe in this point : to trie
what soundnesse there is in the fruits of
his faith, and how sincerely hee doth im-
brace Gods worde. As befoze I saide,
that some would obiect and say, this will
destroy the faith, so am I sure that here
it will be saide much moze : because this
seemeth to take away the surest triall of
faith : if a man may not by and by saye,
I haue good woꝝkes, therefore I haue
the true and liuely faith : I aunswere,
that whosoener hath any good woꝝke in
him, the same hath the true faith, which
hath brought forth that good woꝝke, be-
cause it is impossible without faith to do
any good thing, or to haue any good mo-
tion or intent : but withall I saye, that
it is one thing to seeme good befoze men,
and another thing for to be good in deed
befoze God. In outward appearaunce,
there is little difference betweene the
good deeds of them which feare God sin-
cerely, and the vntimely fruite of world-
lings: but God whose eye doth not looke
vpon the outward shewe, but the inward
affection, seeth which proceedeth of faith,
and which doth proceede of vaine glorie,
or

A Sermon on the

of some other sinister respect, and putteth
as great difference betwene them, as he
did between y^e sacrifices of Cayne and A-
bel. We must take heed then, y^e the fruites
of our faith be ripe and timely, otherwise
they be good but in shew. We must come
then to see first what these thornes are: in
S. Matthew they are called, the cares of
this world and the deceitfulness of riches:
in S. Luke: the cares of riches, and plea-
sures of this life. And in very deed, these
thornes do grow together. For were it
not for the pleasures of this life, there
would be no cares of riches: he whiche
doth seeke greedily for wealth, it is ey-
ther because he woulde be able to haue
wherewithall to fill the lusts of y^e flesh,
and to pamper his body delicately: or els
to set forth himself in pride, and to clyme
ambitiously to honour. For so long as a
man doeth take pleasure in any of these,
so long he is couetous & raketh together
so much, that as the common saying is,
he raketh vp the Dinell and all. What
must we do then? Our heartes are as a
ground that is ranke, and bringeth forth
many weeds: we are set a worke as God
spea

Parable of the Sower.

speaketh by his Propheete Jeremy. Chap.
4.4. Plow vp your faldow, and sow not a-
mong y^e thorns: we must put all diligēce
and care y^e our heartes may be rid of such
noisome weeds as will choke the word of
God, and make y^e it shall not bring forth
fruit in vs. So long as we suffer any of
these in vs, either to loue daintie and de-
licate feeding of our flesh, and to fill our
selues with the lusts therof, or to be gal-
lāt in y^e eyes of men, and haughtely to lift vp
ourselues in our vainglorious minds, and
for y^e maintenance of these delights bend
our care to the world: so long shall we be
unprofitable scholars in y^e school of Christ.
Alas poore men which wold faine come to
God, and yet are glued to the world, they
offer one hand to Christ, and y^e other to y^e
diuel: they can talk of y^e spirit, and yet are
led by y^e flesh: y^e gospel is in their mouth,
and couetousnes lodgeth in their hearts:
their works glister and are grēne before
men and are withered before God: they
seeme to be faithful and are faithles, to be
heires of glory, and yet are the children of
confusiō. Ther are great plēty of these hear-
ers, & specially in such places, wher ther
is

A Sermon on the

is wealth and honours : howe many fall
away choked with the worlde? And yet
we are not afraid of our selues to take
heede that we stand fast. A great mercy
of God it is that we haue not onely the
doctrine layde befoze vs, but also feareful
examples : so that we may buy our wit
with other mens cost. For when we see
the world with delightes and pleasures,
with couctousnesse and ambition, to car-
rie away those whiche pzoesse the Gos-
pell, is not our owne matter in hande,
are not we made of the same mettall
they are, doth not the world assault vs as
it doth them? Yes, and we shalbe ouer-
come also, if the Lorde haue not mercie
vpon vs. The hardnesse of this worke,
ought not to discozage or make vs slack,
but hearing what Christ saith, whome
we ought to beleene, the moze harde, the
moze we are to stirre vp our selues, vn-
lesse we make small reckoning of the
saluation of our soules. He y shal yeeld
and giue ouer the digging vp of these
thornes, because he perceiueth they grow
deepe in his heart, and spring as fast as
he can cut them : is not woorthy to enter
into

Parable of the Sower.

into life : bee which will not continually till and weede this ground, may well haue the Gospell in some sorte soz to grow in him, but not to saue him. Dearely beloued wee muste bee surely perswaded of this, that as there be manie godly men, so they haue attained it with great labour and toyle, yea, they are still set a worke and cannot come to an ende, because these thornes cannot bee vtterlye rooted out.

Those are greatly overseene which thinke it to be an easie thinge to profess Christ vnto saluation: and make no further accounte but to bee Gospellers, at ease: if they can vanquish in disputation, to thinke they haue wonne the field: no, no, they haue a hearte which is harde to overcome: they haue thornes which will not easely be destroyed: here lieth the victorie and getting of the spurs: this man shall bee crowned because hee hath willingly giuen vp himselfe to the power of Gods grace to purge his hearte, and to make roome soz the holie woorde, that it may grow there alane, and not bee overshadowed and choaked.

E.

Nowe

A Sermon on the

Nowe lette vs marke well that which is
sayde heere, both of the stonie and also
of the thornie grounde, howe farre they
proceede in professing Christ, and imbrac-
ing his Gospel: and we shall plainly
see, howe greatlie those carnall Gospellers
whiche will not haue Faith to bee tryed
by the frutes, are deceiued: Faith, faith,
(say they) is that which doeth iustifie, it
is true indeede, but not a fruitlesse faith:
whosoever beleeueth shall be saued: it is
euen so, but not after euerie kinde of be-
liefe: for then why should not these two
sorts of herers be saued, it is merueilous
when the Scripture is so euident, & our
Saviour Christ speaketh so plainly, that
this grosse and doltish error shoulde pos-
sesse the mindes of so manie. But indeede
it is a sweete doctrine, when a man maye
let loose the raines to all the lustes of the
fleshe, at the least thus farre, not to bere
& tormente himselfe in subduing them, &
yet by faith to be saued. When Heauen
& Hell meete together, and God and the
diuell be reconciled, then shall these fleshy
lie Epicures, and vaine proude men
come to their happinesse. When Christ
shall

Parable of the Sower.

shall denye that which hee hath heere uttered, then shall these be true beleeuers.

Let men therfore take heede that they be not deceived, nor made slacke in looking to the fruits of their faith and mortification of vaine fleshly lusts, through y prophane prattling of such worldly belly Gods: beleue not them, but beleue Iesus Christ, who telleth you that it is not enough to heare the word, & to receiue it with ioy, & to let it growe in vs, vntlesse it bring forth reasonable and timelye fruit in vs.

Againe, let vs marke how strong and inuincible an Argument may be gathered out of this text against all contemners and despisers of the worde, such as care not for hearing: these three sortes of hearers, are before them, & nearer to christianity then they, and yet come short: therfore it must needes follow, that such ignorant Atheists, as neither know, nor desire to knowe any thing above this world, are very far from God, although they would seeme with their mouth and lips to draw nere vnto him. For if this

A Sermon on the

matter were well obserued, men would not regarde nor haue those men in estimation to be good & honest, who are very dogs or swine, not regarding y^e precious pearle of the Gospel, but ready to bark & bite at those which bring it. Let a man inquire thus, not of a few, but of y^e greatest part of men, howe say ye to such a man, what thinke ye of him? he is (saye they) a very good man, a good naturd man, a gentle person, trusty to his friend, sure of his word, & doth keepe as good an house as any man of his calling in all this shire. But how is he affected vnto Gods word: is he zealous in religiō? Nay surely, I did neuer heare y^e he did deale y^e way, he is a very quiet man, no medler at al. A notable honest man, as deuout in the lawes of God as y^e horse whiche he rideth vpon, as careful to haue Gods glorie aduanced, as the swine in the stie, a great deale behinde these vnprofitable hearers, which are castawaies: & yet forsooth being very brutt beasts before God (in y^e state they be in, yet vnlesse y^e Lord call them to bee zealous of his glorie) they must be reputed for the best men.

Dur

Parable of the Sower.

Our fieldes are full of such Cattell as these, and if the Lord doe not put too his helping hand, our case is very miserable. If anye of those which were so zealous to heare, that they woulde to their hinderaunce in worldlye matters leaue off their businesse, and follow preaching, as those which flocked to heare Christ, were yet neuerthelesse reiected, because they did not sincerely as they shoulde: What shall we saye of those which will not step out at their doores, euen when they haue nothing to do, vnles it be to sit at cards or tables. If such a man maye be damned, as is moued with some delight, when he heareth the worde preached: What shall we iudge of those wooden blockes and sottish men, who feele no more ioye in it then a post, when it is vttered vnto them? If ther be some go to destruction, which conforme themselves and haue a shew of fruite by the worde: wher shal those wretches appeare, whom the holy word of God can not moue one whit, to reforme their disordered & beastly behauiours. I neede not to stand to inueigh out of this place against those

A Sermon on the

helhounds, which dare open their mouths to reproch and slander the setting forth of the Gospel. The Lorde diminish the number of them.

The last kinde of ground, are the good hearers, which do not onely receiue the seede, but also bring forth the fruits thereof. Although not euery one a like or in the same measure, for some bring forth an hundredfold, some sixty fold, some thirtie fold, according to the measure of Gods graces in them.

Although here be great ods in bringing forth the fruites, yet they be all accepted and accounted for good ground, true Christians, and sincere professors of godlinesse: now as we be taught here that it is required of all to be doers, as S. James saith, and not hearers only cha. 1. ver. 22. so are we also taught, not to despise or rashly to condemne those, which do not bring forth so great a measure of fruit as others do: True it is, as Christ saith, herein is my father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit. Iohn. 15. 8. But it is also as true which he saith in the second verse of the same chapter, E

uery

Parable of the Sower.

uerie braunch that bringeth forth fruite,
he purgeth, that it may bringe forth more
fruite. Then to bring forth most, is moſte
of all to bee deſired, that God maye haue
the greateſt glozie: to bringe forth the
leaſt is not to bee contemned, becauſe
the Lord in time doth purge the, & make
them more fruitfull. I neede not to ſtand
here for to handle manie thinges, or to
make large expoſition, the matter is ex-
ceeding plaine, there is no more but this,
that all our care in hearinge & profeſſing
the Goſpell, bee to receive it into good
ground, and to bringe forth the fruites
thereof. What ſhould I ſtande to rip vp
the ſhamefull abuſe in the contrarie, to
utter how manie euill fruites there be in
many which are Goſpellers. This ſhould
bee but as it were to light a candle in the
cleare Sun ſhine, for all men do ſee them.
I doe not ſpeake this, as though it ſhould
not bee good to crie out againſt them: but
becauſe the former thinges which I haue
now uttered, doe fully diſcloſe them. And
therefore I will heere ende, deſiring the
Lord to write theſe thinges in our hearts,
which wee haue heard with our outward
C.iiij eares,

A Sermon on the
eares, and to make vs good ground, to re-
ceiue y^e heauenly seede, and to bring forth
fruites of the same, that glorifying him
in this world, we may be glorified
of him in the world to come,
through Iesus Christ
our Lorde.
Amen.

FINIS.

